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TELEPHONE TAPS

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18 September

Mexico City - Oswald

This would not involve CIA directly. Appreciation for our sensitivity on the sources-and-methods issue was stated. They want to concentrate on Oswald in Mexico. Who did he see, what company did he find, what did he do.

For instance, there is testimony that he threatened President Kennedy when there. There is conflicting testimony, and they want to introduce it.

We pointed out that the only real hard evidence of Oswald's contacts with Cuban and Soviet officials was from CIA teletaps. It was in this way that we knew that he had dealt with Sylvia Duran in the Cuban Consulate, so we had the Mexicans question her. The Warren Commission was able to quote her, alluding to the existence of confirming evidence (thus protecting our telephone operations). He stated that they hope to have her testify (although it appears that her appearance is not yet sure). In any event, CIA sources and methods are to be protected.

We noted that CIA was a source for other types of reporting, but not constituting as firm evidence. The HSCA approach to private citizens who had been reported as saying things about Oswald--without being operationally connected with CIA--permitted direct evidence from them, without reference to CIA. He agreed in this, although he did not state what witnesses in this category he may use.

Blakey asked if photographs could be used to show witnesses. They would be CIA surveillance photographs. He thought they could be cropped, noting that others had been so treated (the unidentified man in the Warren Commission report). We replied that it may well be possible, but we would want to have our experts check the photographs and discuss how they would be used. We touched briefly on the earlier unauthorized use of CIA photographs in a press-release, for which he apologized again.

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He asked if actual transcripts of telephone conversations could be used. He spoke of techniques of cross-examination to get witnesses to acknowledge or recall things they otherwise would not or had not testified to. We made the point that it probably would be very clear what the source was. Shepanek pointed out that this would be equivalent to acknowledgement of the teltap operations--implied confirmation. Hawkins pointed out the extreme sensitivity of Mexican officialdom to this publicity, in addition to its exposure of an operational activity that continues.

We expressed pessimism about agreement to this, but undertook to study it upon receipt of the transcripts the Committee wants to use.

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